



Equipment Operator Wilson Green shovels mud from Harbison Canyon Road during height of storm.

## Crews Battle Flooding During Storm

More than 200 men and women from Roads, Flood Control, Stormwater and other DPW sections spent hundreds of staff hours battling stormy weather in October, the heaviest month for rainfall in San Diego County history.

While torrential rains dumped up to ten inches of water in some parts of the County, road workers went on Storm Patrol working 12-hour shifts 24 hours a day. Flood Control and Stormwater teams mobilized, even before the first drops fell, to ensure erosion control devices were properly in place and maintained.

DPW made sandbags available to private citizens, first at five road stations, then later at fire stations in areas that burned during last year's fires. Engineers and inspectors worked with staff from Management Services to develop special job codes for work being done. Crews from the

see **Crews Battle Flooding**, page 2

## Calming Lakeside's Willow Road

Heading east on Willow Road from SR 67, the driver's eye spotted a new sign on the roadside—a circle surrounded by curving arrows. Then came a rectangular berm in the middle of the road. Just a few yards down the road there was more.

"This was a long section of road with no stop signs or traffic lights," said Mike Robinson, DPW's head of Traffic & Loss Mitigation. "With a casino just a few miles up the road, traffic through this area was pretty heavy at times."

Local residents were concerned about noise and not being able to enter or leave their connecting streets due to the speed and heavy traffic



Maneuvering through traffic calming devices.

along Willow. The area is used for horseback riding as well and riders were concerned for their own and their animal's safety. The solution—traffic calming measures.

There are several types of traffic calming devices that could have

been used, such as speed bumps or stop signs. Kenton Jones and his team chose a combination of devices to slow traffic, including new signage and small berms in the center of the road. Re-striping also directs traffic in a less than straight path, further slowing speed.

To reduce noise, the Traffic team was able to repave the road with rubberized asphalt as part of the Countywide resurfacing program. "That alone

reduced noise levels by seven or eight decibels," Jones said.

Finally, they prohibited trucks over seven tons on Willow Road. That eliminated noise, reduced wear and tear on the road surface, and reduced traffic counts.

## Crews Battle Flooding (continued)

California Conservation Corps were brought in to build and maintain check dams and install other devices.

In addition, the department set up a special web site to notify both residents and media of road closures, flooding and mudflows and provide helpful flood information to property owners.

These were responses to immediate threat, but there's also an on-going effort to protect burned areas.

### Protecting Fire Impacted Watersheds

It has been a year since the wildfires of October 2003. Burned areas have sprouted new plants, some of which can be attributed to DPW's erosion control efforts immediately following the fires. However, the burned areas are still susceptible to erosion and flooding. New growth is sporadic and does not provide full coverage, partially due to low amounts of rainfall. DPW began re-evaluating burned areas before the rainy season began. Efforts included an aerial overview and subsequent ground assessments. After assessments were complete, DPW staff focused efforts to install erosion protection measures in those areas determined to be at risk for increased runoff or mudflows.



*Despite warning, truck speeds through flooded Lakeside street.*



*California Conservation Corps crew builds check dam in San Diego Country Estates.*

## From the Director's Desk

**T**HAT FOUR PERCENT BULGE IN your check the last few paydays is something unique and special. It's not a gift... it's something you earned.

Our Quality First program is an opportunity to improve service to our customers by improving our processes, reducing expenditures and working more efficiently. At the beginning of each fiscal year we establish our goals. For the next 12 months we monitor our progress, adjust our priorities to reach both our quantitative and qualitative targets.

Every year these goals are more difficult to achieve. But your hard work and creative thinking allow us all to qualify for the top payout.

In the end, we all win. Our customers get improved service, taxpayers get the best in public works and we are rewarded for our efforts.

  
John Snyder,  
Director



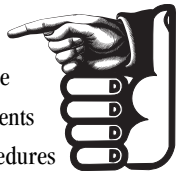
# Employee Recognition & Awards Program Overview

by Kirsten Aaboe Hope, Training Officer

The reason we have an Employee Recognition & Awards Program is so we can recognize our fellow employees who have improved public service through their outstanding and exemplary performance. The program is designed to recognize individuals and teams whose performance has improved service delivery both to the public and within the department. This can involve sustained high performance or result from work done on a special assignment.

*Exemplary performance includes the following:*

- Productivity
- Customer Service
- Special Assignments
- New Ideas/Procedures



*The process is as follows:*

- DPW employees submit nominations to the Employee Recognition Award Coordinator, Tina Walker, at Mail Stop O-304.
- Employee Recognition Committee is comprised of 8 rotating representatives from each division, each serving for one year.
- The Committee reviews nominations and submits proposed recipients and rewards to the Director for final approval.
- Awards are presented at monthly all-hands division meetings.



*Here are program guidelines:*

- Employees may not exceed 24 hours of recognition leave within one fiscal year.

- Recognition leave must be used within the fiscal year in which it was awarded.
- Employees may receive no more than \$1000 within one fiscal year.
- Self-nominations are not accepted.



*The categories to use to nominate your fellow employees are as follows:*

- **Teamwork and/or Customer Service** – \$100 per employee and 1 day of Employee Recognition Leave per employee
- **Leadership** – \$250 per employee and 2 days of Employee Recognition Leave
- **Director's Award** – Up to 2 days of Employee Recognition Leave and up to \$1000 per employee

DPW employees may also receive kudos for providing extraordinary customer service.

## Safety & Wellness

# Repetitive Strain Injuries: Good News, Bad News

by Carl Spiron, Safety Officer

Repetitive strain injury (RSI) is easy to prevent but once contracted, it's hard to cure. That's the good and bad of it. But RSI can be avoided by taking a few elementary precautions.

These injuries occur from repeated physical movements doing damage to tendons, nerves, muscles and other soft body tissues. Occupations ranging from meat-packers to musicians have characteristic RSIs that result from the typical tasks they perform. Lack of adequate rest and breaks and using excessive force almost guarantee trouble.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is one RSI, but it makes up only a small percentage of typing injuries. Tendonitis, bursitis, tenosynovitis/DeQuervain's Syndrome, and several other related conditions may also be involved. All of these are serious and in advanced cases can cause great pain and permanent disability.

A few simple changes in your office setup and work habits can keep long frustrating months or years of pain and disability at bay.



*How Do I Prevent It?*

Correct typing technique and posture, proper equipment setup, and good work habits are much more important for prevention than ergonomic gadgets like split keyboards or palm rests. Your chair and keyboard should be set so that your thighs and forearms are level (or sloping slightly down away from the body), and that the wrists are straight and level—not bent far down or way back. If the table is too high to permit this, you'll need a keyboard tray. Anything that creates awkward reaches or angles in the body will create problems. But remember, even a "perfect" posture may result in problems if it is held rigidly for a long time: relax, **move** and shift positions frequently. This isn't just about your hands and arms, either: the use or misuse of your shoulders, back and neck may be even more important than what's happening down at your wrists. Want specifics?

While typing your wrists should not rest on anything, and should not be bent up, down, or to the side. Your

# Remote Light Controls Installed at Schools

When schedules change, timers for those yellow warning flashing beacons on roads near schools must be changed. Until now, in unincorporated San Diego County, that was done manually—a worker visited 45 separate school flashing beacons at 30 sites from Alpine to Rainbow. That's about to change.



Edgar Monroy monitors timers.

The County received a federal grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the Business, Transportation & Housing Agency to upgrade controllers for school flashing beacons in unincorporated areas of the County. The grant will pay for a system that allows reprogramming of flashing beacon timers from a central location, saving time and ensuring beacons accurately warn motorists of school zones. The system will be fully functional by September 2004.

The Office of Traffic Safety allocated \$1.47 million in federal funds to San Diego and Imperial counties to help communities develop and implement innovative traffic safety programs. San Diego County received \$32,000 of this allocation to fund the pager-based system.



Remotely timed light at Ramona school.

## Repetitive Strain (continued)

arms should move your hands around instead of resting your wrists and stretching to hit keys with the fingers (palm rests give you a place to rest your hands only when pausing from typing, **not** while you are typing).

Wrists also should not be bent to the side, but instead your fingers should be in a straight line with your forearm as viewed from above.

**Increase your font sizes.** Even with ever-larger monitors, many people favor tiny little fonts in their desktops and applications. This encourages one to hunch forward into the monitor to read things, putting pressure on nerves and blood vessels in the neck and shoulders. Configure your screen to show larger, easier-to-read fonts. Do it! Also consider using color schemes that are easier on the eyes, particularly shades of gray for text documents.

**Don't pound** on the keys; use a light touch.

Use two hands to perform double-key operations like Ctrl-C or Alt-F, instead of twisting one hand to do it.

Move your whole hand to hit function keys with your strong fingers instead of stretching to reach them.

**Take breaks to stretch and relax.**

Hold the mouse lightly, don't grip it hard or squeeze it.

Keep your arms and hands warm. Cold muscles and tendons are at much greater risk for overuse injuries, and many offices are over-air-conditioned.

Evaluate other activities. Problems may be caused or aggravated by other things you do frequently. Sports, carrying children, hobbies requiring intense small work (like knitting), and excess effort/tension in other daily things may have enormous impact too.

**Don't tuck the phone between your shoulder and ear** so that you can type and talk on the phone at the same time. This common procedure is very aggravating for your neck, shoulders, and arms.

**Take care of your eyes.** Look away from the screen. Walk outside and look at a tree for a while.

If everyone's been sitting all day, hold a meeting standing up!



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